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BEAT THE BACK TO SCHOOL GERMS

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Video: https://youtu.be/2hm0_sNiN2M

Tampa, Fla. – Most schools in Hillsborough County are back in session and that means students, parents, teachers, and many others are going to be exposed to more germs. As everyone is adjusting to the new schedule, getting sick may cause unnecessary hardships and may be avoided by proper handwashing.

Handwashing is particularly important after using the restroom, playing outside, and before eating, drinking, or preparing food.

Schools are encouraged to promote proper handwashing and include it into the daily classroom routines. Even when hands look clean, handwashing as often as possible is recommended.

How does washing your hands with soap and water work?

- Soap removes the dirt and skin oils that trap bacteria
- Washing motion helps pull dirt and oils free from the skin
- Additional friction from wiping hands removes more germs

Steps for cleaning hands correctly when hand washing (see video: https://youtu.be/2hm0_sNiN2M):

- Wet hands
- Apply soap
- Rub soapy hands briskly for 20 seconds (sing “Happy Birthday” two times)
- Scrub fingertips & between fingers
- Scrub forearm to just below elbow
- Rinse forearms & hands
- Use towel to dry hands & forearms
- Turn off water with towel & throw towel away

If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer wipes or gel.

Steps for cleaning hands correctly with alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Apply a dime sized amount of hand sanitizer gel to the palm of one hand or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer wipe
- Rub hands together covering all surfaces of hands and fingers
- Rub until sanitizer gel is dry

Children should be supervised when using the gel. It is important to highlight that alcohol-based hand sanitizers are not a replacement for frequent handwashing with soap and water. However, alcohol-based hand sanitizers:

- Can be easily used when soap and water are not available
- Act quickly to kill some germs on hands
- Require less time than handwashing

Upon request, the Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County will visit public and private schools to promote healthy habits.

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